

REMARKS

The specification is objected to for failing to provide antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. The Office Action alleges that the specification fails to recite that the clamp assembly comprises at least one compressible member as called for in claim 11. Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the specification and respectfully submit that paragraph [0065] provides support for the recitation of "at least one compressible member" in claim 11. More particularly, paragraph [0065] discloses that the wedge 226 (shown in Fig. 18b as two members) can be configured as the wedge 132 (shown in Fig. 16a as one member). Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the specification provides support for claim 11 and respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

Claims 1-23 are in the instant application, of which claims 2-4, 7, and 16-23 are objected to; claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-15 are rejected; and claims 1, 2, 7, 16, and 23 are amended to more positively recite the claimed invention.

Claims 2-4, 7, and 16-23 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to claims 2-4, 7, and 16-23; however, to reduce the issues, the following action is taken.

Claim 2, on which claims 3, 4, and 17-22 are dependent, is amended to, among other things, be in independent form and include all of the limitations of claim 1, on which claim 2 was previously directly dependent. Claim 2 is further amended to change "attached to" in line 8 of amended claim 2 to --positioned on-- to more positively recite the claimed invention. Support for the amendment to claim 2 is found, among other places, in original claims 1 and 2 and the drawings. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request admittance of the amendment to claim 2, and consideration of amended claim 2 and of claims 3, 4, and 17-22.

Claim 7, previously dependent on claim 1, is amended to, among other things, be in independent form and include all of the limitations of claim 1. Support for amendment to claim 7 is found, among other places, in original claims 1 and 7. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request admittance of the amendment to and consideration of amended claim 7.

Claim 16, presently dependent on claim 1, is amended to be dependent on claim 2. Support for amendment to claim 16 is found, among other places, in the claims presently in the application. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request admittance of the amendment to and consideration of amended claim 16.

The objection to claim 23 is discussed below.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to, and respectfully request allowance of, claims 2-4, 7, and 16-22.

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 949,535 to Hamm (hereinafter also referred to as "Hamm"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hamm; however, to eliminate this issue, the following action is taken.

Claim 1 is an independent claim having claims 5, 6, 8-11, and 23 dependent thereon. Claim 23 mentioned above is objected to but would be allowable if presented in independent form having all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 1 is amended to recite, among other things, "wherein the clamp assembly is between the ring and the first conduit", and the recitation "wherein the clamp assembly is between the ring and the first conduit" is deleted from claim 23. Based on the foregoing, applicants respectfully request admittance of the amendments to, and consideration of amended, claims 1 and 23.

Applicants respectfully submit that there is no disclosure in Hamm of the yieldable prop recited in amended claim 1 having, among other things, a second conduit slidably received in a first conduit; a clamp assembly between a ring (slidably received around the second conduit) and the first conduit, and at least one handle connected to the ring and the first conduit.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hamm, respectfully request withdrawal of the objection of claim 23, and respectfully request allowance of claims 1, 5, 6, 8-11, and 23.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,068,491 to Jakoubek et al. (hereinafter also referred to as "Jakoubek"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm in view of Jakoubek and request

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reconsideration thereof. Claims 12 and 13 are directly or indirectly dependent on claim 1. Claim 1 and Hamm were discussed above.

In the above discussion, Applicants have shown that amended claim 1 is patentably novel over the teachings of Hamm. Applicants respectfully submit that the disclosure of Jakoubek does not cure the defects of Hamm and, therefore, claims 1, 12, and 13 are patentably novel over Hamm and Jakoubek.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm in view of Jakoubek and request allowance of claims 12 and 13.

Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm and request reconsideration thereof. Claims 14 and 15 are directly dependent on claim 1. Claim 1 and Hamm were discussed above.

In the above discussion, Applicants have shown that amended claim 1 is patentably novel over Hamm; therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 14 and 15 are patentably novel over Hamm.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamm and request allowance of claims 14 and 15.

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This Amendment is deemed to place the application in condition for allowance. In the event issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned before further action is taken on the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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